



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Public Affairs**

(202) 252-6933

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/news/2011/apr/news.html>

### **District Man Sentenced to 10-Year Prison Term In Robbery of Coffee Shop at Howard University - Defendant Posed as Police Officer, Displaying Fake Badge -**

WASHINGTON - Ralph Clark, 50, of Washington, D.C., has been sentenced to a 10-year prison term on charges stemming from a robbery at Howard University in which he impersonated a police officer, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced today.

Clark pled guilty in March 2011 to charges of armed robbery, unlawful possession of a firearm, and false impersonation of a police officer. He was sentenced on June 8, 2011 by the Honorable Judge Ann Keary in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

According to the government's evidence, Clark impersonated a police officer and robbed a Starbucks coffee shop at the Howard University bookstore at gunpoint. The crime took place at 12:25 p.m. on April 28, 2010, at a shop in the 2200 block of Georgia Avenue NW.

Clark entered the coffee shop, which was full of customers and employees. He approached an employee, and stated that he was an undercover officer investigating employees in the store. He said that he needed to speak to a supervisor and displayed what appeared to be a police badge.

The employee escorted Clark to the supervisor, who was in a back office. Clark once again said that he was investigating employees and flashed a badge. The supervisor, sensing something was not right, requested to see the badge again, at which point Clark pulled a revolver out of his backpack and pointed it at her. He demanded that she open the safe, threatening to hurt people.

When the supervisor was unable to open the safe, Clark demanded that she open the cash register's drawers. Clark took cash out of several drawers and stuffed it into his backpack.

An alert customer realized that a robbery was in progress and called police. Officers spotted Clark shortly after he left the store. Clark ran and was ultimately apprehended in a

nearby alley. He had a bag filled with cash shoved down his pants. Officers recovered Clark's backpack containing the loaded revolver and fake police badge from a trash can along his flight path.

In announcing the guilty pleas, U.S. Attorney Machen expressed his appreciation to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), and particularly praised the work of Detectives Osbaldo Luna, Ricardo Leiva, and Jose Morales, Officers Larry Garrett, Deborah Lambert, Alexandros Varvounis, Antonio Womack, Ronald Paugh, George Klein, Suzanne Leo, David Murray, and Sonia Fails. U.S. Attorney Machen also commended the work of U.S. Attorney's Office Paralegals Wanda Trice and Tamaya Reid. Finally, he commended Assistant U.S. Attorneys Emily Scruggs and April Fearnley, who prosecuted the case.

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